

AMIAA NEWS

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Rev. Peter B. Doghramji, Ph.D.
Editor



Rev. Dr. Peter Doghramji Elected New Executive Director

The Reverend Dr. Peter B. Doghramji, B.A., B.D., Th. M., Ph. D., D.D., was elected as Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America on December 13, 2003, effective January 1, 2004.

Dr. Doghramji was born and raised in Aleppo, Syria. He grew up in the Syriac Evangelical Church within the Armenian Evangelical Union. He received his Junior College diploma from Aleppo College, where he later taught and also served as its first national president. He graduated from the American University of Beirut with a B.A. and from the Near East School of Theology with a diploma, equivalent to B.D. He was also awarded the Th. M. degree by the Divinity School of Harvard University and the Ph. D. degree, magna cum laude, from Princeton Theological Seminary. He was also awarded an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Ursinus College.

Dr. Doghramji began his ministry in 1953 in Hassakeh, Syria, where he served a heterogeneous congregation of Arabic speaking Presbyterians and Assyrian (Syriac) and Armenian Christians as a licensed pastor and principal of the elementary school. He was ordained in 1955. He married his seminary school-

mate, Marie Bedikian, in 1953. They have three children, Karl, Paul and James, who are practicing physicians, and seven grandchildren.

Dr. Doghramji's ministry also included chaplaincy at Aleppo College, Interim Ministries at the National Evangelical Church of Aleppo, Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church of Downey, CA, the United Armenian Congregational Church of Hollywood, the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church of Havertown, PA, where he later served for nine years as their call pastor, and since October 2000, the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York. He taught courses in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at Aleppo College, served as Faculty Secretary and Associate Professor of Theology at the Near East School of Theology, and was an adjunct professor at the American University of Beirut and Lancaster Theological Seminary.

In 1979, Dr. Doghramji was elected as the Assistant to the Conference Minister, and later in 1985 as the Conference Minister and President of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ composed of 7 Associations and 215 churches. He retired in 1991 after serving the Conference for



Rev. Dr. Peter Doghramji

12 years.

Dr. Doghramji has served on various boards, including the Near East School of Theology, Lancaster Theological Seminary, the Pension Boards of the UCC, the AMAA and the AEUNA, where he also served as its first Executive Secretary and later as Moderator. The Armenian community and the AMAA family will greatly benefit from the gifts he brings to enhance the mission of the AMAA.

CHANGE OF AMAA'S E-MAIL ADDRESS

Please note that the new e-mail address of the AMAA is: **amaa@amaa.org** and the website is: **amaa.org**

AMAA NEWS - A publication of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc., 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652. Tel. (201) 265-2607; Fax (201) 265-6015; E-Mail: amaa@amaa.org; Website: <http://www.amaa.org>

COVER PICTURE - Children & Parents attending Christmas Program in Stepanavan, Armenia

From the Executive Director...

Dear Friends and Partners in Mission:

We have nine missionary letters of St. Paul preserved in the inspired Word of God. Each letter starts with a personal greeting to the church. All of these greetings have one thing in common encapsulated in a few words: "I thank God for you!"

When I was asked to offer the invocation at the last Annual Meeting of the AMAA in Montreal, it never occurred to me that in two months' time I would be writing to you repeating those same words which I quoted then before offering my prayer. As I greet you with this letter, I would like to echo St. Paul's words saying, "I thank God for you!"

St. Paul had many other things to write about, including "the contribution to the saints". There will be other occasions to write about them, the work of your mission partners, their joys and sorrows, their needs and their struggles. But for now, I want to express my gratitude to God for the AMAA family, born and raised and supported by the Armenian Evangelical Churches, and the countless children of God in North America, the Middle East, France, Armenia and all around the world, who give of themselves for our common ministry and mission. They include officers, directors and staff, members of committees, volunteers who devote their time and energy, and all those who give and donate joyfully, to better the lives of the needy and illuminate the hearts of many with the good news of rebirth, reconciliation, salvation from sin and human misery, through Jesus the Christ. They also include my illustrious predecessors, some of whom are in glory. I thank God for my immediate predecessor, The Rev. Jirair Sogomian, who gave two and a half precious years of service before his retirement in a critical time, when the AMAA was orphaned by the sudden death of The Rev. Dr. Movses B. Janbazian. I thank God for The Rev. Dr. Giragos Chopourian, who built up the AMAA from a fledgling organization to the towering mission instrument it has become. We join his family and friends in congratulating him on his 90th birthday, which was celebrated in Havertown, on January the 18th.

I shall continue to thank God for you.

*Yours in Christ,
Rev. Peter B. Doghramji, Ph. D.*

BIBLE STUDY SERIES

"BIBLICAL PROFILES OF MISSIONARIES AND THEIR MISSION"

I. Introduction

by Peter Doghramji

In the following series we shall study the profiles of Biblical personalities who were "sent by God" on special missions. These studies are not intended to be definitive or exhaustive. They are "appetizers" for personal devotions with a focus on evangelism and mission.

The persons are selected at random. Perhaps St. Paul comes to mind as the first missionary. It is rather tricky to go that route and categorize the order of missionaries. If we did that God would be the first. God is both the Sender and the one who is Sent. God is a sending God. Before God sends someone, God sets the example by coming to us. God is not static. God does not just sit there and watch the world go by. There is movement in God. That is why

we know God as Spirit.

In terms of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, we describe this missionary activity of God by the Father, who sends the Son, the Son who is sent by the Father, and the ever present and dynamic Holy Spirit who is sent by the Father and the Son (some prefer saying "through the Son"). This doctrine or church teaching is not a theological formula but an explanation as to who God is. The God whom we worship through Christ is not the Aristotelian "Unmoved Mover," but the Mover who is in movement. God moves towards us in Christ; and that is the gospel.

Scripture Passages: Jude 14: 23-25; 20: 21-22

AMAA-Armenia Christmas Programs

by Harout Nercessian

Christmas is a special time for both children and adults. Adults are concerned about all the preparations – Christmas dinner, decorations and food. Children on the other hand, look forward to all the fun Christmas is expected to bring – parties, candies, Santa, and, of course, the gifts.

True to its tradition, AMAA offers special Christmas programs for tens of thousands of children and their parents in Armenia, Karabagh and Georgia. These programs provide the children with Christmas joy and touches them by the all-important, life-changing Christmas message of God's love.

AMAA Christmas 2003 programs were held between December 23 and January 16 in 50 locations throughout Armenia, Karabagh and Georgia. Twenty thousand children and their parents participated. The audiences heard the Christmas message of hope through drama, songs, and other art forms. The children had fun with clowns, Santa, games and special gift packages of candy and educational material.

These programs touch the young little hearts in special ways. Two children in Gyumri were overheard arguing whether the baby Jesus on the stage was a doll or real. Eventually, the girl turned to her brother and said, "it is the real Jesus, and he has come to melt your heart".

In many places, the Christmas message is told by fairy tale characters dear to children. This is done in most creative forms. In Stepanavan, a Christmas version of snow-white and the seven dwarfs was staged. The plot included robbers who kidnapped Santa. The kidnapped Santa tells them about God's love expressed on Christmas. The robbers believe in Jesus and release Santa. One child later commented, "if robbers can change, so can I".

The Christmas programs are acted by children that participate in AMAA Christian Education programs such as Bible classes, children's choirs and acting classes. These young actors are blessed as they develop and use their talents for the glory of God. The commitment of these children is an example for adults to follow. David, a fourteen year old boy had no money to ride the bus to



Christmas in Stepanavan.



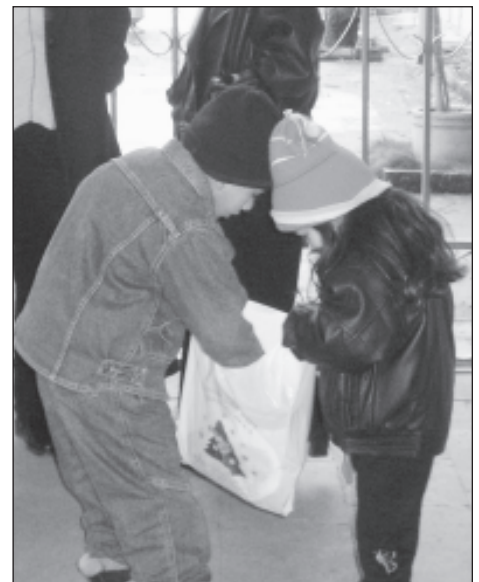
Harout Nercessian and Rev. Rene Leonian during the Christmas Program in Yerevan.

drama practice, and there was nobody at home from whom to borrow money. He was determined to go to his practice. To get some cash, he sold some of his clothes at the nearby second-hand clothing store and arrived at his practice on time. Needless to say, his parents had mixed feelings about the incident.

In Talin, AMAA staged the story of a paralyzed boy whose only prayer and Christmas wish is to be healed. The drama touched many in the audience because the boy who played the role of the paralyzed boy suffers from a limping leg. He acted out of experience and from his heart.

The last Christmas program was held at the prestigious, 640-seat Hagop Baronian

(cont'd on the following page)



A Special Christmas Party In Armenia

by Harout Nercessian

Mrs. Belle Ashodian is a Christian lady, living in California, whose heart has deep compassion for the poor in Armenia.

Mrs. Ashodian's compassion is not passive. She was moved to help in very practical ways. She sponsors 20 children and over 200 needy families in Armenia.

Mrs. Ashodian's loving care extends beyond sending financial support to these desperately needy families. She takes great interest in their overall well being. She prays for them and often calls them to find out how they are doing.

Every Christmas, these families are treated to Mrs. Ashodian's special care. Realizing that these families cannot afford a good Christmas meal, Mrs. Ashodian organizes a big Christmas party for them.

Over 100 sponsored individuals attended the two Christmas parties that were organized on December 28 (Yerevan) and on January 11 (Gyumri). Some were unable to attend because of winter travel difficulties. The guests were served a rich table of meals, fruits, and dessert. Most important though, they had a great time of fellowship, worship and thanksgiving. They were all very grateful to Mrs. Ashodian whose caring heart, expressed through her generous sup-



Rev. Hamlet Gureghian of Yerevan Church blessing the table.

port, enables them to overcome the challenges of life.

The gratitude of the sponsored families is expressed in the numerous letters that are written. They all thank Mrs. Ashodian for the Christmas party. However, their greatest gratitude was expressed for the ongoing relief support that they receive.

Narine Mirzoyan who looks after seven orphaned children thanks Mrs. Ashodian, writing, "you are the light and heating of

our home". She has electricity in her home thanks to Mrs. Ashodian's monthly support.

Ophelia Yeghian asks for God's blessings on Mrs. Ashodian, because she writes, "through your support you saved my life and that of my family"

This sacrificial support pours out of Mrs. Ashodian's loving, generous heart. As in the words of the Apostle Paul, this is "a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God".G

(cont'd from previous page)

Theater in Yerevan. The drama entitled, "The Happy Clown" was presented to 3,000 children and adults in five sessions. This near-professional presentation, acted by AMAA's theater group told the story of a sad clown that found joy in Christ on Christmas day. The event was covered on two national TV newscasts.

Although Armenia has a very rich artistic heritage, those living in the remote regions are rarely exposed to art or the Gospel. AMAA staged Christmas programs in several such places, including the village of Toumanian. For many decades, this small village of 2,000 people has been deprived of Gospel message. The collapse of communism brought more misery. There are no jobs in

the village and most people live in deep poverty. About two years ago, AMAA started reaching out to the villagers. Two Christmas events were organized in Toumanian – one for children and one for adults. AMAA's Christian Education team from the town of Alaverti put on a Christmas presentation, and brought Christmas packages for the children. This was the main Christmas event of the village that brought joy to many children and their parents.

On behalf of the staff and volunteers of AMAA Armenia, and on behalf of the tens of thousands of participating children, I thank those who prayed for and contributed towards these Christmas programs.

We are also very appreciative of the vol-

unteers of the Camp-Christmas Program and the Orphan Child-Care committees. We acknowledge their creative efforts at raising funds for and generating awareness of these Christmas programs.

We are also very grateful to the staff and volunteers of AMAA Headquarters in Paramus, NJ. They provide logistic support in financial matters, packing, shipping and more.

I want to extend my personal thanks to Mr. Andy Torigian, Mr. Dikran Youmshakian and Rev. Rene Leonian for their leadership, counsel and prayers.

Most important, we praise God for enabling us all to reach out to these children with the love of Jesus Christ.G

Boston Area Orphan & Child Care Committee Raises Over \$48,000

On October 15, 2003 the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Orphan and Child Care Committee of Boston held its 8th Annual Luncheon/Auction to benefit underprivileged children in Armenia.

Once again beautiful centerpieces created by the hostesses for their event were silently auctioned and Mike Wankum, Channel 56 Meteorologist, wittingly and with great humor, auctioned 15 items. Red Sox tickets, Holiday Weekends, Concert Tickets, Thanksgiving Dinners were furiously bid for under his able gavel.

The committee, the hostesses and some 150 attendees helped to raise and net over \$48,000!

The AMAA Orphan and Child Care Committee has been raising funds for orphans and underprivileged children in Armenia since it was formed shortly after the devastating 1988 earthquake.

The funds raised help schools, orphanages, summer camps and some 2,000 children and their families.

All administrative costs involved in helping these needy children are underwritten by the AMAA. Thus 100% of moneys raised



Some of the Boston area Committee members at work.

can be used directly for the children.

If you wish to help, please send your tax deductible contributions to: AMAA/ Orphan and Child Care, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652. G

AMAA Hosts Ambassador Ordway

United States Ambassador to Armenia John Ordway visited the headquarters of the Armenian Missionary Association of America on Sunday, January 14, 2004. A reception organized on this occasion was hosted and attended by AMAA President Mr. Andy Torigian, Board Members and friends from the East Coast. The Ambassador was accompanied by Keith Simmons, Director of US AID Programs in Armenia, along with other officials.

In his opening remark the Ambassador presented a short report on the progress in Armenia during past years. The Ambassador recognized the AMAA and told that he was familiar with AMAA mission programs, specifically the sponsorship of 2,800 needy children and their families. The Ambassador commended the AMAA on the free medical care provided to poor families through AMAA's Medical Clinic. He noted that AMAA is one of the largest overseas employers in Armenia with over 300 people on the payroll. This was followed by a lengthy discussion on issues mostly related with aid provided to the Republic of Armenia by US Aid agencies as well as various Armenian organizations including the AMAA.

A question and answer period during the reception created much interest and gave an overview about the US government's outlook for Armenia. It was very encouraging to hear that Armenia rated best compared to other republics of the former Soviet Union. Mr. Keith Simmons encouraged the AMAA to apply for US Aid assistance by following their guidelines.



(l to r) Dikran Youmshakian, AMAA Administrative Director, Ambassador John Ordway and Andrew Torigian, AMAA President.

AMAA President Mr. Andy Torigian thanked the Ambassador for this visit and wished him success in his endeavors and future plans.

The Ambassador was invited to share a light dinner during which those present had a chance to converse with him. G

Armenian Heirs To Share \$20M Insurance Company Settles Case Linked to 1915

by Merry Firschein*

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), headquartered here, will receive more than \$330,000, part of a \$20 million settlement of a lawsuit against New York Life Insurance Co. brought by the heirs of Armenians killed in the genocide of 1915. The AMAA is one of nine charitable organizations across the country that will share \$3 million.

The agreement resolves claims by more than 2,000 heirs of Armenians on file in the Ottoman Empire who bought New York Life insurance policies before 1915 and were unable to collect after the massacre.

Andrew Torigian, president of the AMAA, said the settlement is about more than money.

"It kind of puts a closure to that one portion of the massacre and its after-math," he said. "For those who are directly involved, it satisfies a little bit to get some compensation for it."

Torigian said he never knew his grand-parents, who were killed in the genocide.

After attorney fees and administrative costs are paid, the plaintiffs and other heirs will divide about \$11 million. About 1.5 million Armenians were killed in the massacre.

"Our willingness today to resolve policies that may remain unpaid from that era shows that New York Life adheres to the same val-

ues of integrity and humanity that guided us then," said Sy Sternberg, New York Life chairman and chief executive.

The nine organizations that will receive a share of the \$3 million also include the Armenian Church of North America Eastern Diocese and the Armenian General Benevolent Union, both in NY, and the Armenian Relief Society, United States chapter, in Watertown, MA.

Torigian was pleased his organization has been recognized. The AMAA was founded in 1918 and is the worldwide missionary arm of the Armenian evangelical churches and communities, which serve 22 countries, including Armenia. The AMAA has been headquartered in Paramus for about 35 years.

The \$333,333 will go toward the AMAA's \$2 million budget to provide care to Armenians in the Near East, Torigian said. The AMAA runs a medical center in Armenia's capital, Yerevan, and dental clinics in Yerevan and Vanatzor.

They also serve about 1,000 new mothers and their infants who need special formula because of breastfeeding problems. The AMAA assists more than 2,800 orphans, which also include children who have lost one parent, and 200 especially needy fami-

lies. The organization also runs schools and gives college scholarships to needy students in Armenia.

Torigian said he would discuss uses for the money with the organization's board of trustees.

The class-action lawsuit was filed in November 1999 in Federal District Court in Los Angeles by Martin Marootian of California and 12 other plaintiffs. Marootian, now in his late 80s, said his mother had tried in 1923 to collect on a policy bought by her brother-in-law but was unsuccessful.

The plaintiffs claimed that after the 1915 massacre of about 1.5 million ethnic Armenians by Turkey, then part of the Ottoman Empire, many survivors did not know how to collect on insurance policies. Marootian and the other plaintiffs also claimed that many people didn't know that family members bought policies in the first place.

The agreement, announced last week, still must be approved by the courts; a hearing is scheduled for Feb. 15 in District Court in Los Angeles. Potential claimants will be notified, according to New York Life officials.

Almost 1 percent of Bergen County residents and 0.2 percent of Passaic County residents claimed Armenian ancestry, according to the 2000 census. People of Armenian heritage make up about 0.2 percent of the population of New Jersey, census data show. G

** Merry Firschein is a Staff Writer of The Record. This article appeared in the February 3, 2003 issue of The Record*

ARMENIA SUMMER CAMP/CHRISTMAS COMMITTEE — SPRING CONCERT

The Armenia Summer Camp/Christmas Committee is planning its Spring Concert as a fund raiser on May 2nd at 2:00 pm at the Armenian Evangelical Church in New York City.

An Armenian String Quartet with a pianist (seniors of Julliard School of Music) will perform. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. For reservations or further information please call the AMAA office at 201-265-2607 or the New York Church office at 212-685-3177.

All funds raised from this concert will be designated towards Summer Camps and Daily Vacation Bible Schools held in Armenia, Georgia and Karabagh. Last year 10,500 children attended whose lives were enriched emotionally, physically and spiritually. We hope with your financial support and prayers this summer will be as successful and will bring joy to the lives of these children.

G I will attend and support the Spring Concert with my donation of US\$ _____

G I am unable to attend but would like to support the summer camps with my donation of US\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

(Please make tax deductible donations to AMAA earmarked for Summer Camps and mail to 31 W. Century Rd. Paramus, NJ 07652.)

Maestro Vatsche Barsoumian Receives Tribute by Haigazian Auxiliary At January 18 Benefit Luncheon

By Phyllis Hamo

In honor of Maestro Vatsche Barsoumian, founder of the Lark Musical Society and Lark Conservatory of Glendale, the Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary of Los Angeles has established a scholarship to pay tribute to their worthy alumnus. The announcement was made by Auxiliary President Joyce Stein at a benefit luncheon at the Four Seasons Hotel, Beverly Hills on Sunday, January 18, 2004.

Mrs. Stein presented the conductor with a framed etching of the Haigazian University Mugar Building created by artist Inge Markarian, wife of Dr. John Markarian, founding President of Haigazian College, now Haigazian University.

Joyce Abdulian eloquently introduced the guest of honor, citing his many accomplishments, and endorsing the Lark Conservatory in Glendale where voice, instrument, and dance are taught and where, she announced, "enthusiasm is felt everywhere."

In his heartfelt response, the towering but gentle Maestro expressed deep appreciation to all who have inspired and sustained him, especially four people, the late Armine Darakjian, the registrar who gave him encouragement, Rev. Elise Farr whose recommendation made it possible for him to receive a scholarship to Princeton New Jersey's Westminster Choir College, Herair Mouradian, now President of the Haigazian Board of Trustees, and Dr. John Markarian.

He thanked his family members, including his devoted wife Arpi, their five children, Hovig, Shahe, Raffi, Shoushik, and Alik, and his father in law, for their constant support. He praised Haigazian University for offering him the opportunity to pursue his life's work in the field of music.

Lark musicians and vocalists joyfully performed in honor of their beloved conductor in a program lauded by the audience. Six Armenian folk instrumentalists marched onto the stage and skillfully played the musical instruments of their homeland in tribute to the Lark choir-master who has instructed musicians far and wide.

UCLA co-ed and Lark choral member Mari Kartalyan, a student of Vatsche's since

she was eight years old, praised her dedicated teacher, then sang with her brother Ashot Kartalyan, Aghavni Jouharian, and Shahe Barsoumian, in an cappella quartet of Vatsche's musical protégés.

Other musicians who played their hearts out were young Aram Garibian, accompanied by his mother Janet Garibian, capturing the attention of the audience with what seemed to be his magic violin, the proficient Natalie Buickians who played piano, and talented singer Heibert Alaverdian who sang in Armenian, accompanied by the gifted Artashes Kartalyan.

The luncheon was chaired by Ida Levy and Silva Hussenjian who orchestrated the duties of their dependable committee of Auxiliary members. MC Phyllis Hamo read congratulatory letters from Dr. Paul Haidostian, the current President of Haigazian University, from Dr. Peter Doghramji, Executive Director and Andy Torigian, President of the Armenian Missionary Association, and from Herair Mouradian, President of the Haigazian Board of Trustees. She was pleased to announce that Auxiliary member Maggie Matossian had recently generously increased the Arthur and Maggie Matossian Haigazian University endowment fund to \$100,000. Dr. John Khanjian, the immediate Past President of Haigazian University attended and offered the closing benediction.

Vatsche Barsoumian has taught music at Haigazian College, the American University of Beirut, the Near East School of Theology, and the Beirut University College. He is the founder of several musical groups, including Armiss in Beirut and has given many choral symphonic concerts in Lebanon, Syria, France, and the United States. In 1984 he founded the Parsegh Ganatchian Music Conservatory in Beirut and in 1994 he founded Drazark Publications which has published 30 titles of treatises, monographs and scores relating to Armenian Music.

In 2001 Vatsche was awarded an honorary professorship at the Komitas State Conservatory in Yerevan, Armenia and in 2003 he was the musical conductor of



The honoree, Maestro Vatsche Barsoumian.

Tchouhadjian's Armenian operetta Zvart at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. Noted performances also include Verdi's Requiem and Bach's St. Matthew's Passion. The Lark Musical Society is home to children's choirs, adult choirs, and instrumental and dance programs. It is headquartered at 411 E. Acacia Street, Glendale, CA 91205, 818-500-9997.G

Under the Auspices of
**THE ARMENIAN MISSIONARY
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

**LARK MUSICAL SOCIETY
Presents**

**Meditation
on Peace**

**LARK CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA
VATSCHÉ BARSOUMIAN, *Conductor***

**Saturday, March 6, 2004, 7:00 p.m.
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
OF GLENDALE
401 East Broadway, Glendale, California**

**Tickets: \$50, \$30, \$15 (students)
For additional information
call (818) 500-9997**

Sociedade de Senhoras da Igreja Central Evangélica Armênia de São Paulo Comemorou 65 Anos de Bênçãos Com um Chá de Confraternização para as Crianças na Armênia

"Porque somos feitura sua, criados em Cristo Jesus para as boas obras, as quais Deus preparou para que andássemos nelas."

(Efésios 2: 10)

Foram 65 anos repletos de bênçãos vividos em nossa Igreja, colaborando no trabalho do Senhor, como servas dignas da Sociedade de Senhoras.

E nesse ano passado, quando celebramos esta data com algumas festividades e Culto de Ação de Graças, homenageamos as irmãs que se destacaram em nosso meio e ainda no mês de dezembro, com enorme júbilo recebemos, uma vez mais, a visita proveniente dos Estados Unidos da nossa querida Louisa M. Janbazian.

No dia 10 de dezembro passado, no Encontro de Senhoras para um Chá de Confraternização, por ocasião do Natal, tivemos a presença de cerca de 70 senhoras da nossa igreja e de toda a coletividade armênia de São Paulo, que vieram para ouvir a palestra em armênio, sobre "Natal das Crianças na Armênia", traduzida pelo irmão Garô Aharonian, da Igreja Evangélica "Irmãos Armênios". Nessa ocasião, além de solos e poesias, a Louisa apresentou um vídeo muito bem elaborado sobre os trabalhos da AMAA, investidos na missão de colaborar com a nossa mãe-pátria Armênia, em especial, na distribuição de presentes para as crianças.

Todas as pessoas presentes ficaram emocionadas com este trabalho abençoado que a AMAA vem realizando durante os Acampamentos de Verão e Natal e sensibilizadas ao final do



programa, fizeram doações para contribuir na compra de brinquedos para o Natal das Crianças na Armênia.

Ficamos felizes em saber que, de alguma forma, estamos colaborando com esse magnífico trabalho e oramos para que Deus abençoe ricamente todos aqueles que voluntariamente têm participado desta ajuda; que seja tudo para honra e glória do Senhor Jesus Cristo.G

- Marlene G. Gazebayukian

The Women's Society of the Armenian Evang'l Central Church of São Paulo Commemorated 65 Years of Blessings With a Benefit Tea for the Children in Armenia

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

(Ephesians 2: 10)

It's been 65 blessed years that we are collaborating in the work of the Lord, as the faithful servants of the Women's Society of our church.

During this past year, while we were celebrating this important date with some festivities and Thanksgiving worship, we honored some of those distinguished ladies in our midst, and in December, with much joy, we received once again the visit of our dear Louisa M. Janbazian, from the United States.

On December 10, during a Christmas Benefit Tea, more than 70 ladies from our church, as well as from the Armenian Community of Sao Paulo, came to hear about the Children's Christmas Programs in Armenia, presented in Armenian by Louisa and translated

into Portuguese by Garo Abrahamian of the Armenian Evangelical Brotherhood Church. After musical and poetical presentations, Louisa showed a video, which elaborated the work of the AMAA in our motherland Armenia, and especially the distribution of Christmas gifts to the children.

All those who were present were very touched with the work that AMAA does in the Summer Camps and during Christmas Programs. At the end of the presentation most of the ladies who were present made special donations towards Christmas gifts for our children in Armenia.

We were very happy to know that, in some way, we were also collaborating with this magnificent work, and pray that God will richly bless all those who voluntarily participated for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.G

(Translated from the above Portuguese article by Louisa Janbazian.)

Responding To Terror And Destruction

It was an act of terror thousands of miles away from our shores. It was not directed against Armenians. Nevertheless our sisters and brothers in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Beyoglu, Istanbul, suffered the consequences of the terrorist bombing of the British Consulate. The blast damaged the church building. Windows were shattered. The sanctuary was useless unless urgent repairs were made.

The Chairman of the Church Council Ohannes Torkumoglu wrote to us about their need. At its December 13th meeting, the AMAA Board of Directors unanimously allocated \$5,000 for the needed repairs. Ironically, some windows were damaged before this terrorist attack by "little terrorists" of the neighborhood youth. Also, the



roof was leaking and needed urgent repairs. It was providential that those repairs were not done before that terrorist attack, says Mr. Torkumoglu; otherwise,

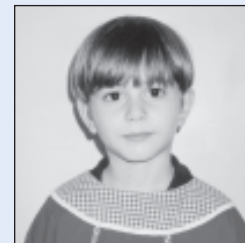


it would have been wasted.

Despite evil, things work together for good for those who love God and put their trust in Him.G

IN SEARCH OF SPONSORS

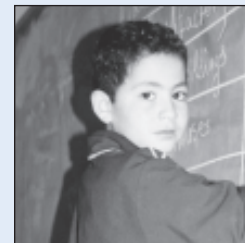
Children in Lebanon and Syria rely on AMAA's Child Education Sponsorship Program to be able to attend Armenian Evangelical schools. Out of 1,200 underprivileged children attending schools, so far only half have sponsors. There are about 600 children like Nareg, Garine, Abraham, Patil, Narine and Koko who need sponsors. Please look at their pictures and find it in your heart to sponsor them. A gift of \$200 will keep one more student in school for one year.



Nareg



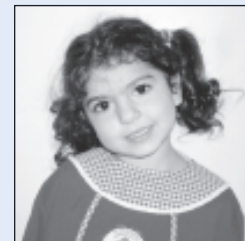
Garine



Apraham



Patil



Narine



Koko

Yes, I want to sponsor ____ child(ren) and make sure he/she attends school. Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____.

Name _____

Address: _____

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The Pastor's Manual by Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, D.Min.

A Book Review

by Rev. J. C. James

Recently the Armenian Evangelical World Council and the Armenian Heritage Committee jointly published Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian's bilingual book entitled *The Pastor's Manual for the Officers of the Armenian Evangelical Churches*.

According to the author, it aims at accommodating the relatively wide range modes of worship of the Armenian Evangelical churches worldwide and attempts to serve as an instrument to strengthen their spiritual solidarity and their sense of unity. (p. 166)

The Pastor's Manual is prepared specifically for the use of Armenian Evangelical ministers, preachers, In-Care Students, seminarians, and spiritual and lay leaders who lead various worship services.

Besides its Introduction and Conclusion, the *Manual* consists of ten parts: *The Order of Worship, the Sacraments, Membership, Marriage, Funeral Services, Christian Ministry, Services of Dedication for Churches and Organizations, Services for Special Occasions, Feasts and Commemorations, and the Creeds and Statements of Faith of the Armenian Evangelical Church*.

In this volume the Rev. Tootikian states that unlike the ancient liturgical churches, the Armenian Evangelical churches are not

bound by ecclesiastical authority to a fixed Order of Worship. They belong to a tradition in which great flexibility and experimentation are germane. Theirs may be characterized as free worship where a variety of forms may be used, borrowed, or created. They are free to utilize materials from ancient and modern Christian traditions. But free worship, claims the author, does not imply disorderly worship. In fact, there are a number of fundamental principles and common ingredients in the Armenian Evangelical Worship Services (p. 7).

Because I am not versed in the Armenian language, my personal observations are limited to the English part of the book.

The Pastor's Manual is catholic (universal) in its inclusiveness with reference to the great tradition of which we are a part, but it also is specific with material for the Armenian heritage, not commonly available in English.

Books like this are usually the work of an appointed committee. How blessed we are to have a pastoral spirit as Dr. Tootikian to do this work for us.

The written prayers will enhance the worship of any service if used as printed but have the added value of being broadening to any personal devotions and a beginning point for

putting together an inclusive pastoral prayer. One can profitably leaf through these prayers and be warmed.

The practical planning chart for wedding services (pp. 63-64), is so useful that everyone should have something like this to simplify the details that can get lost (though I would discourage the couple from having memorized vows because of the possible failure of human recall in such emotional moments).

I was moved by deep feelings that surfaced in the liturgies for special occasions but especially in the form for (p. 148) Armenian Martyrs' Day, Armenian Evangelical Day (p. 152) and the Feast of the Holy Translators (pp. 154-155), were also worthy of becoming classic prayers.

And as you use the book certain memorable phrases jump out and make the heart glad: (p. 153) Lift our eyes to you, O Lord, that we may burst asunder all tombs of selfishness, pride, and sin. (p. 154) Use us as a light that is not shadowed, as salt that has not lost its savor.

These and other phrases too numerous to list, whether from the heart and mind of Pastor Tootikian or collected by him, will leave all of Christendom, not only Armenian Christians, in his debt. G

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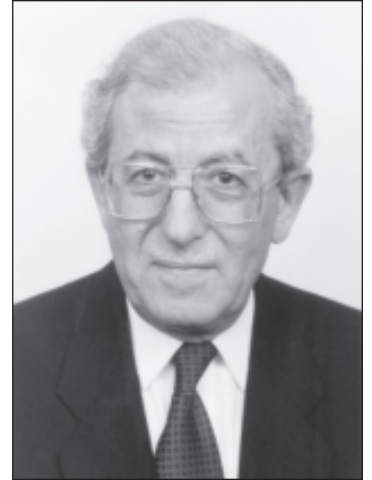
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Esther Mgrdichian Hekimian

Esther was born to (hotelgry) Hovhanness Mgrdichian and Efronia Makhshikian on October 10, 1924 in Kessab, Syria. She was the eldest of seven children. She went to Lebanon and received her degree in teaching. She taught in Kessab for several years along with Zeron Hekimian. Zeron fell deeply in love with her and he decided to ask for her hand in marriage. Unfortunately, in 1947 Hovhanness gathered his entire family and left for his homeland of Armenia, where she continued her career in teaching and helped to support her family.

Being the eldest child in the family, Esther was burdened with taking care of her sisters and brothers when she lost her beloved mother, Efronia in the spring of 1951. Two years later, she lost her beloved brother, Vahan, who had just turned 18. After many hardships, Esther put her own needs aside and with the utmost dedication she continued taking care of everyone in her family. Then again in 1961, Esther lost her dear father Hovhanness.

In 1972, Zeron Hekimian came to visit Armenia. After twenty-five years, he met Esther and he decided to ask for her hand in marriage again. They were married in 1973 in Los Angeles, CA. Esther got a job at the Bank of America and she rapidly moved up in position because of her wonderful disposition and dedication to her work. Even though Esther and Zeron did not have any children, they lived happily for twenty-eight years.

In 1995, Esther was hit with another tragedy, when she lost the youngest of her siblings, her beloved brother Vahe, at the age of 56. At about the same time Zeron, her husband, became very ill and Esther lovingly took care of her beloved husband during the entire time of his illness. At the time they were living in Fresno, CA. In the spring of 2000, Esther lost her one and only life-long partner which hit her very hard and she felt lonely and depressed.

In October of 2002, Esther had heart surgery and on November 22, she went to be with the Lord. She left behind many relatives, friends, neighbors, students and acquaintances. She also left a legacy of devotion to those she loved. She was truly a remarkable woman.

She is dearly and greatly missed by everyone who knew her. God bless her soul and keep her alive in our memories.

Her niece, Janet Elmajian Navasardyan



Ephronia Karakashian

Ephronia Karakashian was best known as ORIORT (Miss Teacher) Shnorhokian, due to being a teacher for 40 years. She considered herself as mother of many children, all being her former students, especially mother to her 7 nephews and nieces. She treated her stepchildren and their families as her own. Reading from her diary, "I was born in Occupied Armenia Town of Aintab, in November 1910. My parents were new born spirit-filled Christians. In 1903, (7 years before my birth), a revival started in my town where my father Hovhannes Shnorhokian along with my mother Victoria (Aynilian), many professors and high class people were converted to Christian faith..."

In 1915, when the First World War started, we were deported to the banks of the Euphrates River. In January, it was a miracle to be alive and healthy with two families under one tent. Eventually we were deported to Aleppo, Syria.

My parents raised three children. My brother Manasseh was an ordained minister, Editor of Chanasser and Badanegan Artsakank as well as an educator. My sister Annali was a Registered Nurse. I was a teacher. I graduated from high school in Aleppo, Syria. I was given a scholarship to a British College for Teachers in Beirut Lebanon... In 1960 I was one of the three fortunate Armenian teachers who got the grant by Calust Gulbenkian to go to England for refresher courses...

In 1967 I visited the US for a summer vacation. Towards the end of my visit I met a Christian widower, named Karekin Karakashian of Newton. We got married in September 1967 in the First Armenian Church in Belmont.

God granted us ten years together... Karekin passed away in September 1977.

I continued my evangelistic work within the First Armenian Church Ladies Aide, as well as during my visits to Armenia and France."

Ephy taught Saturday Armenian School in St. James School for many years. She was very hospitable and generous with her cooking.

Ephy spent her final seven years in The Armenian Nursing Home, in Jamaica Plain. She went there gladly due to an opportunity to have Christian devotions, Bible studies and being an encouragement for the residents.

Ephy was always content and at peace with her difficult situations, thanking God all the time. God took her to heaven on July 2, 2003 at 10 a.m. where there was a shortage of Armenian and Christian teachers.

Ephy will be waiting for all of her loved ones to join her in heaven.

Arpi Shnorhokian Sarian

Avedis Soghomonian

Avedis Soghomonian, 104 years of age, passed away Sept. 29, 2003 in Dearborn, MI. He was born in Marash, Turkey, on Dec. 25, 1898. He was the son of Levon and Gurji (Koomrian) Soghomonian, and the brother of Azniv and Samuel.

Avedis told the story of his life to his many nieces and nephews. He remembered that one Saturday morning when he was a young boy, he had eaten a special breakfast prepared by his mother, and went out to play with a neighborhood friend. Little did he know that he would never return to his home and was never to see his loving parents again, as they were brutally massacred by the Turks that very morning. He, too, was caught and imprisoned, but was able to escape. He was forced to flee from his village, traveling on foot with only the clothes on his back. Later he met his brother, sister and aunt at camp. They traveled together to Cyprus, and eventually made their way to Ellis Island. After examinations on the island, Avedis was not allowed to remain in the country. He was sent back to Cyprus, due to an infection in his eye. He was placed in an orphanage for Armenian children, where he was trained to be a tailor. He later settled in France, where he lived for several years, while working in a department store. Around 1937, Avedis was able to return to the US. Loyal to his adopted country, he faithfully served in the US Army during World War II. After the War, he embarked on his employment with the American Beauty Manufacturing Co., from where retired, after many long years of service. He resided with his brother, Samuel, in Ferndale, Michigan, and later took residence at the St. Sarkis Towers, in Dearborn.

Avedis was known to be a modest, agreeable, and humble man, who was content with very little. Although he never learned to drive an automobile, he traveled to beautiful, distant lands, including such places as Alaska, Hawaii, Mexico, South America, and Europe. He was not a wealthy man, but he continuously looked for and found ways to give to others. Though he did not think of himself as a highly educated person, he learned to speak, read and write in several languages, including Armenian, English, French and Turkish. Avedis lived a life dedicated to Christ, having a strong and steadfast faith in God. Au Revior, Avedis! We will miss you until we meet again.G



Angel Andonian

One of the first things we think of upon contemplating our mother's life is how closely her name matched her personality. A truly selfless and devoted mother, wife, and grandmother, she lived her life to the fullest in the service and for the welfare of her family.



Angel was born, one of twin girls, 92 years ago to Dr. Kevork & Maria Sarkissian. Her twin, Adelina, did not survive past the first few days of her life. Angel was the youngest of 6 children in a loving household in Killis, until 1915 when, in view of deportation of Armenians out of Turkey, the family moved to Aleppo, Syria. Mom had a relatively privileged upbringing. She had the occasion to acquire a great number of skills and to develop her natural talents. She became a resourceful and meticulous artisan in sewing, knitting, needlework and cooking. As a young person she learned to play the piano and attended private schools graduating from the American High School and Junior College for Girls in 1930.

She met our father, Haigazoun in the youth group and choir of the local Armenian Congregational Church and they wed in 1935. They had four children. She suffered irrevocably the unexpected and tragic loss of her daughter, Ida and son-in-law Antoine in 1995. Yet she lived to see the birth of 12 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

Mom was a woman of enormous faith. She believed and lived by this doctrine. Her faith was her strength, to trust God. Her faith gave her courage to emigrate to America, go to work at age 58, with high standards of moral and work ethic. Finally, her faith reassured her that one day she will go to Heaven.

For the past 4 years we watched her health decline. During the last week of her life, it was love that strengthened the bond between us. She slipped away gently and quietly, knowing we were there, singing Hyer Mer, stroking her face and telling her how much we loved her, and that she was on the road to Heaven to join her loved ones.

Mom, your life has come full circle. The collective human memory and the essence of your continuing existence will live on in the special way you touched each of us. You are now a real angel as of October 29, 2003.

*Sam & George Andonian, Mary Demirjian
(her children)*

Evelyn Basralian

Evelyn Terzian Basralian, passed away at her home in Hasbrouck Heights on December 12, 2003 at the age of 91. She was described by friends and family as a woman of great strength, wisdom and humor. Mrs. Basralian was a particularly remarkable woman because of her achievements which spanned nine decades and six children, during which time she was uniquely able to give her love, show her understanding and exhibit a willingness to embrace changing attitudes and values of the times, while holding steadfast to the traditions of her faith. She was a prolific letter writer and communicated with her friends all over the world. As an avid reader and collector of books, she parceled out articles and books to family and friends on subjects from "what would contribute to living a good family life" to politics and education. Born in College Point, NY, she received a BS degree in 1935 from New York University. During college, she worked as a dietician at Macy's in New York and later taught Home Economics in the Cinninatus, NY, and Lyndhurst, NJ school systems. She was married to Dr. Joseph B. Basralian, a urologist and attending physician at Hackensack University Medical Center. He predeceased her in 1972. She was a founding member, a past president and board member of the Hackensack Hospital Auxiliary. She was also a past president of the Women's Auxiliary of the Bergen County Medical Society. She was a founding member of the Women's Club and Contemporary Society of Hasbrouck Heights. She left a letter to her children which was read at her bedside on Friday in which she said, in part: "I love you all so much and am grateful for God's gift of each of you - all so welcomed, cherished and loved. What a wonderful and blessed life I have had ... good parents, brother, relatives and friends as guardian angels, devoted caring children, and above all, a husband without equal." She is survived by her brother, Lawrence Terzian of Hackensack; son Peter H. and his wife, Sandra, of Houston; son Joseph L. and his wife, Jacqueline, of Franklin Lakes; daughter Evelyn Tashjian Ambrose and her husband, Robert, of Mahwah; daughter Karen M. Toplian and her husband, Joseph, of Englewood; son Gary J. and his wife, Jackie Myers, of South Orange; son Dr. Kevin R. and his wife, Louise Weidel, of Ho-Ho-Kus; 17 grandchildren and four great grandchildren. The funeral was held on Tuesday, December 16, 2003 followed by the interment at Hackensack Cemetery. Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to the AMAA Orphan Child Care or the Christ Episcopal Church Restoration Fund, Hackensack, NJ. G

Dora Muradian

Dora Muradian left us to be with her Heavenly Father on Tuesday, December 23, 2003, at the age of 83. She was born to Nishan and Hranoosh Esajian on September 6, 1920, in Kingsburg, CA. She was a life-long resident of Kingsburg, attending Harrison School and graduating from the Kingsburg High School. She later attended Reedley College.

She married Sam Muradian on June 14, 1941, and they enjoyed 62 years of life together. She was a life-long homemaker and kept a beautiful home and yard. She kept busy in the summers by canning and was "famous for her pickled peppers". She always had a bounty of fruits and vegetables from Sam's garden. Her happiest moments were when her house was full of kids and family, the more noise the better. She took great satisfaction from feeding everyone who came to her home.

Dora was a wonderful cook and an accomplished seamstress. She enjoyed golfing for many years and was the envy of many because she accomplished two "holes in one". She was a member of K.R.C.C. and also the Tuesday Club.

She was a lifetime member of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church in Kingsburg and later in Fresno. She was a Sunday School teacher and active in the Ladies Fidelis group. She enjoyed serving her church in any capacity where she was needed.

She was the loving mother of Carolyn Taber and her husband Alton; Linda Palm and her husband Stan; and Jim Muradian and his wife Norma. She was the grandmother of Craig Taber, Laurie Lewis, Ryan Palm, Darren Palm, Jared Muradian, Jeremy Muradian, and Jarrid Paige. She had nine great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. She is also survived by her loving husband Sam; brother, Henry Esajian; and many nieces, nephews and cousins. She was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Edward Esajian; and sister, Lili Avedian.

"Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also and he praises her." Prov. 31:28

She was lovingly cared for until the end by Sam who was totally devoted to her and his love is an example to all who knew them, and the relationship they had.

A graveside funeral service was held at the Kingsburg Cemetery on Tuesday, December 30, 2003. A Memorial Service followed at the First Armenian Presbyterian Church in Fresno.

Donations may be made to the First Armenian Presbyterian Church (FAPC) or the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc. (AMAA), or donor's favorite charity. G

Haroutune Kalayan

Haroutune Kalayan was born on June 2, 1908 in Aintab, Turkey. In 1915, after his older brother and father were massacred, his mother, his brother and he moved to Aleppo, where he attended Aleppo College. Then he came to American University of Beirut, where he graduated with an MS in Engineering.

In 1937, he married Berjouhi Shiredjian. Together, they left for Cyprus where he taught at the Melkonian College for a few years. On his return, he started to work in the Archeology Department of greater Syria. When Lebanon claimed its independence, he worked at the Archeology Department of Lebanon and taught part time at the Engineering Department of the American University of Beirut.

He was a member of the First Armenian Evangelical Church and a prominent leader in the Armenian community. He was a scholar, lecturer, and an author.

He restored all the ancient ruins in Lebanon. He won the "Said Akel" Award for his work. In 2001, when he went back for a visit to Lebanon, the Minister of Culture, Mr. Ghassan Salame, acknowledged him for all the restoration work he had accomplished in Lebanon.

In 1978, he went to Jordan and worked in their Archeology Department until he retired in 1989. Shortly after his retirement he moved to the United States to be with his children. He is well known in the archeology community and has given many lectures in the Middle East and Europe. His love of the ruins can be seen in: Palmyra, Baalbeck, Anjar, Sidon, Byblos, Jerash, Petra, and many other sights.

Haroutune Kalayan passed away on Sunday, December 21, 2003. On Friday December 26, 2003, the Reverend Dr. Peter Doghramji performed funeral services at the Presbyterian Cemetery in Bound Brook, New Jersey. He was then laid to rest next to his beloved wife.

He is survived by his two daughters Alis Ispentchian and Chouchan Samman, five grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

An Honorable Mention Award in the name of Haroutune and Berjouhi Kalayan will be given every year by the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America.

"Blessed are they who die in the Lord; they rest from their labors and their works follow them."G

Hrair Bizdikian

Hrair Bizdikian, known as "Nick" to his Greek friends. A partial portrait of the man.

Hrair was born on December 28, 1930, in Athens, Greece. He died at the age of 72, on September 26, 2003, in Tinos, Greece. His passing brings to memory many thoughts about him, but on this occasion of his memorial we like to remember him simply as a Christian, a man who tried to follow Christ.

Here is what Jesus says, "Whatever you did for one of the least of my brothers, you did it for me" (Matthew 25:40). Here Jesus portrays his follower as one who looks at others as if



they were Christ himself, a person who cares for others and who is passionately involved in their welfare, especially people who are in difficulty. This is a person who takes a keen interest in the well-being of his fellow men and women, a person who is warm and loving, generous, and always ready to extend a helping hand.

Hrair could be characterized with many different traits, but the above picture of the follower of Christ fits best in portraying him. Surely most of us remember him as such, generous, giving, friendly, interested in other peoples' needs, never refusing to help, always with a smile of approval and encouragement. He liked to talk to people, especially to young people, with the hope of helping them. As such, he has touched many people with the love of Christ.

His brother, Jerair

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends whose names were submitted to us for publication in the AMAA News.

Arlen, Lucy
New York, NY
* **Atamian, Fimi**
Avakian, Leon
Belmar, NJ
* **Basralian, Evelyn**
Hasbrough Hgts, NJ
* **Bagian, Mary**
Rumford, RI
* **Bandoian, Lucy**
MA
* **Casparian, Theresa**
Floral Park, NY
* **Galloshian, Rose**
* **Gulesserian, Shake**
Saratoga, CA
* **Harpootlian, Beatrice**
Miami Shores, FL
* **Hekimian, Esther**
Fresno, CA
* **Kalayan, Haroutune**
Bridgewater, NJ

Karjian, Hovsep
Los Angeles, CA
* **Kolligian, Madeline**
Waltham, MA
* **Koudouzian, Loussia**
Clovis, CA
Mardirosian, Quhar
Emerson, NJ
* **Muradian, Dora**
Kingsburg, CA
* **Nalbandian, Zarouhie**
Fairview, NJ
* **Nercessian, Myrna**
Oghigian, Virginia
* **Pambakian, Madeleine**
Reseda, CA
* **Shushan, Helen**
MA
Yeretsian, John
Cranston, RI

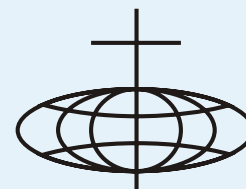
* Memorials were designated for AMAA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Witness the impact of AMAA's & AMAC's mission and service programs in Armenia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Participate in special tour to historic points of interest</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Have a fellowship and express solidarity with the people of Armenia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Enjoy memorable social and cultural events</i>

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Take an optional 3-day extension tour to Karabagh with an additional Can. \$150.00, US \$115.00

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS, APRIL 10, 2004

The above **PRICES** include: 1 night hotel in Prague, 12 nights "ANI Hotel" in Yerevan, with breakfast and dinner, all airport duties, visas, daily excursion and fees in Armenia and Karabagh, pick up and return to & from Zvartnotz Airport in Yerevan. (Prices are quoted from Canada - departure Toronto or Montreal airports, and from US - departure any US north-east major airport.

***NOTE:** For further information and reservations, please call Mr. Mihran Jizmejian at (416) 491-9879, or Contact AMAC, 45 Fairglen Ave. Toronto, ON M1T 1G8, Canada, Tel. (416) 429-5669; Fax: (416) 429-9879; E-Mail: amacinc@aol.com*

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